



RYA Press Release

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Iain Percy and Andrew Simpson in action in Guanabara Bay, Rio de Janeiro
Credit Fried Elliott/friedbits.com

Percy and Simpson World Champion Stars

Beijing gold medallists Iain Percy and Andrew Simpson have scooped the World title after a thrilling final race climax to the Star World Championship Regatta held in Rio de Janeiro, which came to an end today (21 January).

The six-day event held at the newest Olympic venue saw difficult light wind conditions with the pair fighting for their title amongst an 81-boat-fleet boasting 11 former world champions including 33-year-old Percy himself who won the title in 2002.

Simpson commented; "It's been a tough week with very difficult conditions so we are really pleased to have won. Brazil is the home of Star sailing so it's a very special event for us to have won especially here".

Yesterday saw an opportunity for the Skandia Team GBR duo to clinch the title a day early in the penultimate race having created a 19 point lead in the first four races. The Swiss pairing of Flavio Marazzi and Enrico De Maria, currently the top ranked sailors in the world, however put paid to that posting a sixth place in the race delaying the championship decision until the last days racing.

Percy and Simpson went into the final race in a comfortable position needing to post a ninth or better themselves or ensure the Swiss finished the race outside the top three boats in order secure the title. The pair employed a match racing strategy against the Swiss but with extremely shifty light winds in Rio's Guanabara Bay, the race proved quite a challenge making for an exciting finale to the week.

Percy commented; "We started off chasing Mazzari to the unfavoured end of the course but when the wind shifted 40 degrees to the left it then became the favoured end of the course and we had managed to push them in to a good position!

"We managed to catch up so we were quite close to him in the end and then we were able to relax and enjoy the last lap of the course knowing we were world champions," he continued.

With light airs it was all about boat speed and Percy was keen to pay tribute to his crew.

"Boat speed is 90% down to the crew and Andrew really made it easy for me this week enabling me to point the boat in any direction and go faster than anyone else," he concluded.

Skandia Team GBR team mates, John Gimson and Ed Grieg finished the regatta in 41st place.

In winning the regatta and world title Percy and Simpson beat defending world champions George Szabo and Rick Peters (USA) who finished in 28th as well as top Brazilian crew Torben Greal and Marcelo Ferreira who finished third, Greal having picked up the ISAF Rolex World Sailor of the Year Award in 2009. Swiss Mazzari and De Maria finished second.

Simpson concluded; "It's not been an easy week and we made some mistakes - it's a good reminder for us we've got some work to do to be the best for 2012 but we're really chuffed to have won."



Head shot Andrew Simpson left Iain Percy right – Credit Fried Elliott/friedbits.com

The Olympic champions will hold the world title for 22 months with the next world championship not taking place until December 2011 in Fremantle.

ENDS

Ellie Williamson

RYA Racing Communications Officer

T: 023 80 604219

M: 07769 505203

E: ellie.williamson@rya.org.uk